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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND  
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Lebanon, Palestinian Elections,  
Iraq, Iran (1/11-16)

11. Summary: Syrian papers reported a demonstration by Lebanese  
students and youth outside a government office in Beirut to  
protest the visit of US Assistant Secretary of State David Welch.

Papers also quoted an official media source in Damascus strongly  
criticizing the statement made by Welch in Beirut. The source  
said the statement aimed to escalate pressure on Syria because of  
its policies, which advocate stability and comprehensive peace  
and oppose aggression and occupation. The source added that  
Welch's statement constitutes a new, desperate attempt to raise  
the morale of the forces and figures that oppose stability in  
Lebanon and are hostile to Syria at a time when efforts are being  
made to restore stability to this Arab country.

Papers also cited statements by Lebanese figures emphasizing  
support for the Lebanese resistance and for Syria. One statement  
is by Lebanese ex-Premier Salim al-Hoss, who criticized the  
Lebanese voices that describe the Lebanese resistance as "weapons  
of treachery" and acquit the Israeli enemy of the crime that  
claimed the life of Rafik al-Hariri. Another statement, by  
Lebanese ex-Parliamentarian Najah Wakim, totally rejects all  
foreign intervention in Syrian and Lebanese internal affairs.

Papers also reported that Saudi Arabia and the UAE have declined  
an official French request to grant political asylum to former  
Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"Syrian official source strongly criticizes statements in Beirut  
by David Welch, US Assistant Secretary of State for Middle East  
Affairs. The source stresses that these statements are a  
desperate attempt to boost the morale of anti-Syrian figures in  
Lebanon" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/15)

"Lebanese security forces violently curb a Lebanese demonstration  
denouncing US intervention in Lebanon. Over 16 persons injured  
and 3 others arrested during the demonstration"

"Office of Lebanese Presidency: Khaddam's statements are  
unacceptable fabrications" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/15)

"John Bolton, US envoy to the UN, attacks UN Chief Kofi Annan for  
attending solidarity event with Palestinians" (Government-owned  
Al-Thawra, 1/15)

"France looks for another asylum for Khaddam" (Government-owned  
Al-Thawra, 1/14)

"Lebanese ex-Premier Salim al-Hoss: US pressure aims to impose  
the Greater Middle East Project to destroy Arabism and tear the  
region apart to serve Israel. Former Lebanese Minister Suleiman

Franjia: Syria has brought peace back to Lebanon; Jumblatt dreams of fragmenting Lebanon" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/14)  
 "Iranian President Ahmadi Najad: No concession regarding the nuclear issue. Bush: We seek a diplomatic settlement" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/14)  
 "Mubarak discusses developments in Lebanon with Lebanese FM Al-Saniora. Lebanese emphasis on maintaining relations with Syria and rejecting foreign intervention" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/13)  
 "Turkish FM Gul: No Cooperation with US and Israel against Syria" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/13)  
 "Disagreements once again over the Iraqi constitution. A US General expects increase in attacks in Iraq" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/13)  
 "Amal and Hizbollah support healing rift with Syria on the basis of the Taif Accord" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/12)  
 "Palestinian resentment over Jerusalem siege. Ashrawi calls on Washington to deter Israel. Hamas confirms its participation in elections" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/12)  
 "Iran calls on Europeans to understand the aim of its nuclear activities. Iranian President: Iran's nuclear activities are for peaceful purposes.  
 "Congress threatens to stop loans for reconstruction in Iraq. Democrats answer Bush: Our loyalty is to our country not to you" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/12)

### 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Exhausted Excuses"

Muhammad Ali Buzah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (1/14): "Merchants of blood and politics in Lebanon are escalating the situation and maintaining the climate of

and oppose aggression and occupation. The source added that Welch's statement constitutes a new, desperate attempt to raise the morale of the forces and figures that oppose stability in Lebanon and are hostile to Syria at a time when efforts are being made to restore stability to this Arab country. Papers also cited statements by Lebanese figures emphasizing support for the Lebanese resistance and for Syria. One statement is by Lebanese ex-Premier Salim al-Hoss, who criticized the Lebanese voices that describe the Lebanese resistance as "weapons of treachery" and acquit the Israeli enemy of the crime that claimed the life of Rafik al-Hariri. Another statement, by Lebanese ex-Parliamentarian Najah Wakim, totally rejects all foreign intervention in Syrian and Lebanese internal affairs.

tension whenever an attempt is made to heal the rift and safeguard Lebanon's unity and Arabism and fraternal relations with Syria.... These Lebanese, whose names were associated with Lebanon's crisis and civil war and with collaboration with Lebanon's enemies, have attacked the Arab endeavor, embodied by the Saudi-Egyptian initiative, to contain the Syrian-Lebanese crisis. This group has installed itself as the advocate of the devil and the defender of Israel out of spite for Syria, Arabism, and the valiant national resistance and its weapons and sacrifices."

"This group risks dragging Lebanon, and with it the region, into the fire and to partition.

"Maniac Walid Jumblatt, with the logic of collaboration and humiliating mercenary subservience to the United States and Israel, is repeating lies and falsehoods and spreading the poison of hatred against Syria and its positions.... Jumblatt is creating sedition in Lebanon and inciting against the resistance as part of the conspiracy of Zionization, internationalization, and the imposition of the so-called Greater Middle East plan.... This hysteria shows that these Lebanese figures are experiencing a real crisis, as they know that they are mere pawns and cheap tools who have sold themselves and their countries, and exhausted their excuses that will soon be rejected and sent to their natural place in the dustbin of history."

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"The Maestro and the Orchestra"  
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Izz-al-Din al-Darwish, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, commented (1/12): "Some Lebanese are not happy to see Syrian-Lebanese relations return to their normal state of brotherly relations based on neighborliness and mutual interests. This repulsive and very small minority, which has links with foreigners and which is loyal to them at the expense of the homeland, publicly places itself on the other side and hinders every effort to solve the problems in Syrian-Lebanese relations and every attempt to heal the rift among the Lebanese themselves. This Lebanese group appeared nervous during the Syrian-Saudi and Syrian-Egyptian summits on Syrian-Lebanese relations.... They directed abuse and accusations at and spread poison among the Lebanese, heedless of the consequences. They have accused everyone, including some Arabs, of treason. They have encroached upon the nationalist leaders in Lebanon. And they have made utterances that, to say the least, reflected blind hatred toward Lebanon, Syria, and Arabs in general."

"The maestro [a reference to Progressive Socialist Party leader Walid Jumblatt] and his orchestra are certain that the return of Lebanese-Syrian relations to their normal state would mean, among other things, the failure of their plans and, consequently, the decline of their leadership. They are certain that the revelation of the truth about the Al-Hariri assassination would take from their hands the most important cards they use to tamper with Lebanon and its relations with Syria. This is why they launch media and political attacks, fabricate lies, level accusations, draw strength from foreigners, and call for direct international trusteeship. When one of them saw that relations with Syria and the investigations of the Al-Hariri assassination were heading in

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the right direction, he went so far as to call on the US Administration to occupy Syria. He also urged foreign support to crush the nationalist political regime in Syria! These people know their real size in Lebanon and the Arab world."

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"A Position that Gives No Cause for Joy"  
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Ahmad Dawwa, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (1/15): "Palestinians should not be happy that the US has asked Israel to allow the residents of Jerusalem to participate in the legislative elections, because the American and Israeli statements regarding HAMAS' participation in the polls give no reason for joy. The remarks of US Assistant Secretary of State David Welch on the need to exclude groups and individuals who refuse to condemn terrorism and violence, who do not acknowledge Israel's right to exist, and who refuse to disarm, do not encourage optimism...."

"Palestinians should be worried because Israel and the US are bargaining with the Palestinian Authority over a purely domestic issue and a legitimate Palestinian right. Any commitments made by the Palestinian Authority as a result of such bargaining, such as a pledge to disarm the resistance, would be unjustified and would place more obstacles in the way of the Palestinian people as they seek to end the occupation and establish their independent

state....

"The next few days will perhaps disclose details about the American talks with the Israelis and the Palestinian Authority. But these parties will be wrong if they believe that the Palestinian people will agree to bargain over any of their rights or to abandon any aspect of their steadfastness in the face of the continuous Israeli aggression against them."

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"A Step Serving the Umma and its Solidarity"

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Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (1/11): "The Arab nation will ultimately be able to overcome all ordeals, no matter how intense and regardless of the power of the foreign forces that cause them. Perhaps what we saw in Jeddah and Sharm al-Sheikh three days ago [President Al-Asad's visits] and the preceding activities, contacts, and consultations on the highest levels provide the best proof that Arab leaders, at times of hardship, adopt one position and one objective, namely, protecting the nation and safeguarding its borders and existence."

"The entire Arab nation is facing major dangers, although the accusations and threats are directed at Syria at this stage. All Arabs are being burned by the fire of the US theory of 'constructive instability....' The war on Iraq and developments in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories are part of the American Greater Middle East plan...."

"All weapons are being used today to subdue the Arab will, of which Syria is the spearhead. The Jeddah and Sharm al-Sheikh

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summits call for optimism and restore hope to our troubled souls. They are a constructive step on a long road that we hope will continue in order to serve the nation and its interests and protect its threatened existence."

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